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The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Promotion and protection of human rights

Identical letters dated 30 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government and further to our earlier letter dated 11 October 2018 regarding the so-called "local council" elections of 30 October 2018 that the occupying Israeli authorities attempted to impose on Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/73/432–S/2018/911), I should like to convey to you the following information.

Conditions in the occupied Syrian Golan have deteriorated even further because the occupying Israeli authorities continue to coerce the Syrian citizens of that territory as part of their ongoing policies aimed at annexing the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981), the relevant General Assembly resolutions and the Geneva Conventions concerning territories controlled by an occupying Power.

As part of their effort to resist having elections imposed on them by the occupying Israeli authorities, Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan have organized, over the past days and weeks, marches to protest against and express their rejection of the above-mentioned elections. The protests organized by Syrian citizens in response to the attempts of the occupying Israeli authorities to conduct elections by force reached their peak today, 30 October 2018. In response, the occupying Israeli authorities deployed troops to suppress the protest marches and fired toxic gas on demonstrators in the town of Majdal Shams, choking children, elderly persons and women as they resisted the occupying Israeli forces.

Such conduct by the occupying Israeli authorities is aimed at legitimizing illegal institutions that represent an occupying Power and at implementing their colonialist and racist project to Judaize the occupied Syrian Golan. This Israeli scheme is also

aimed at legalizing and perpetuating the occupation and applying "Israeli law" in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the occupied Syrian Golan is an integral part of its territory and that it will strive, by all available ways and means, to return that occupied territory to the homeland, sooner or later. It also reaffirms it supports for Syrian Arab citizens as they resist Israeli occupation and reject these illegal elections, the decision to incorporate the Syrian Arab Golan into the occupying State and all the illegal measures that have been imposed by the occupying Israeli authorities.

It wishes to stress that it is unacceptable for an occupying Power such as Israel to continue to reject and disregard all United Nations resolutions calling for it to end its occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan. Under those resolutions, all the actions that Israel has taken to change the legal status, demographic composition and geographical nature of the territory are considered null and void and without effect under international law.

Moreover, the Government and the people of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirm that they utterly reject and absolutely condemn this hostile and reckless action and the attacks committed by the occupying Israeli forces against innocent civilians, including children, women and elderly persons, in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic calls upon all international organizations, including the Security Council, to reject clearly these flagrant Israeli violations of international law and norms, the Charter of the United Nations, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981), wherein the Council considers that the decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and without international legal effect.

The Syrian Arab Republic would also like to reiterate that these hostile Israeli actions and acts of provocation will increase tensions and exacerbate the situation in the occupied Golan and the region. It therefore calls upon the Security Council to take urgent action to maintain international peace and security by condemning these Israeli aggressions against Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan and by compelling Israel to respect the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations. The Council must also compel Israel to cease its illegal settlement policies and its oppressive measures against our people in the occupied Syrian Golan, stop providing any form of material and moral support to armed terrorist gangs in Syria and end its policy of contempt for international law and the international community.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 38, 55 and 74, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative